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NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

B.C. introduces legislation for a seniors' advocate

VICTORIA – Legislation was introduced in British Columbia today to create the Seniors' Advocate Act, which will help build a more accessible, transparent and accountable approach to seniors' care.

"This legislation enables the creation of a seniors' advocate to serve as a voice for B.C. seniors," said Health Minister Margaret MacDiarmid. "The advocate will work to promote positive change that will benefit seniors, their families and their caregivers."

British Columbia will be the first jurisdiction in Canada to create an Office of the Seniors' Advocate once the legislation is enacted.

The advocate will monitor seniors' services, promote awareness, work collaboratively with seniors, families, policymakers, service providers and others to identify solutions to systemic issues, and make recommendations to government to improve the welfare of seniors.

Establishing a seniors' advocate was a commitment made in the Seniors Action Plan, released in February 2012. A public consultation on the role and function of the seniors' advocate took place over the spring and summer of 2012.

"I have heard from seniors, their families, care providers throughout the province about the many non-medical issues that seniors face that make it difficult for them to remain in their homes," said Minister of State for Seniors Ralph Sultan. "I am pleased that we are moving forward on establishing the Office of the Seniors' Advocate. This office will further our commitment to deliver on our Seniors Action Plan. It will also help improve our programs, services, and systems of support in relation to health care, personal care, housing, transportation and income support for seniors."

Improving services for seniors is a key component of B.C.'s Families First Agenda and the legislation to establish a seniors' advocate is also a commitment of the 2013 speech from the throne.

More information on the seniors' advocate can be found online at:
www.seniorsbc.ca/seniorsadvocate

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